

# THE PRASANTHI BHAJAN GROUP



## *Overview*

**THE PRASANTHI BHAJAN GROUP (PBG)** WAS FOUNDED BY BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA IN THE EARLY 1950S WITH BHAGAWAN HIMSELF AS THE LEAD SINGER. OVER THE YEARS, HE HANDPICKED MEMBERS OF THE GROUP TO LEAD BHAJANS, PLAY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND PARTICIPATE IN CULTURAL PERFORMANCES DURING FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS IN THE DIVINE PRESENCE. ALL THE BOYS WHO ARE PART OF THE PBG HAVE AT ONE POINT STUDIED IN THE SATHYA SAI SCHOOL OR UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS IN OOTY, PUTTAPARTHI, AND/OR BRINDAVAN. UPON GRADUATION, SOME HAVE CONTINUED TO BE A PART OF THE PBG WHILE THEY WORK IN PRASANTHI NILAYAM IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES, PROVIDING VALUABLE SERVICES ACROSS THE ASHRAM'S AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS. THESE MEMBERS REMAIN ACTIVE IN THE GROUP - PERFORMING, COMPOSING, WRITING, SPEAKING, AND ACTING IN CULTURAL AND MUSIC PROGRAMS IN PRASANTHI NILAYAM AND ON RADIOSAI, INCLUDING REGULARLY LEADING AND ACCOMPANYING BHAJANS IN THE MANDIR.

THE INSTITUTIONS THAT THE PBG MEMBERS REPRESENT INCLUDE:

- ***SSSVV: SRI SATHYA SAI VIDYA VIHAR, OOTY:*** FOUNDED IN 1978, THIS WAS THE FIRST PRIMARY SCHOOL SET UP BY BHAGAWAN AND HOUSED AND SCHOOLED BOYS AND GIRLS FROM GRADES 1-5 (THE SCHOOL EXPANDED BRIEFLY TO INCLUDE GRADES 6 AND 7 FOR BOYS, BUT CLOSED SHORTLY THEREAFTER). THE SCHOOL WAS CLOSED PERMANENTLY IN THE EARLY 1990'S AND CONSOLIDATED WITH THE SRI SATHYA SAI HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL IN PUTTAPARTHI.

- ***SSSHSS: SRI SATHYA SAI HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL:*** CONTINUOUSLY RUNNING SINCE IT OPENED IN THE EARLY 1980'S, THE SCHOOL HOUSES BOYS AND GIRLS FROM GRADES 1-12 IN PUTTAPARTHI.
- ***SSSIHL: SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING, PUTTAPARTHI + BRINDAVAN:*** THE FIRST PART OF THIS UNIVERSITY STARTED IN ANANTAPUR AS A COLLEGE FOR WOMEN IN 1968, QUICKLY GROWING INTO THREE CAMPUSES AND BECOMING A DEEMED UNIVERSITY IN 1981. TODAY, THE UNIVERSITY OFFERS BACHELORS, MASTERS, DOCTORATE, AND POST-DOCTORATE PROGRAMS IN VARIOUS SUBJECTS TO MEN AND WOMEN ACROSS ITS VARIOUS CAMPUSES.
- ***SSMCM: SATHYA SAI MIRPURI COLLEGE OF MUSIC:*** FOUNDED IN 2001, THE SSMCM OFFERS FOUNDATION, DIPLOMA, AND POST-DIPLOMA COURSES IN VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE HINDUSTANI AND CARNATIC STYLES OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN MUSIC.
- ***SSSIHMS: SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER MEDICAL SCIENCES:*** FOUNDED IN 1991, THIS WORLD-CLASS HOSPITAL OFFERS FREE SUPER SPECIALITY (SECONDARY AND TERTIARY) MEDICAL TREATMENT TO ANYONE WHO NEEDS IT. IT ALSO SERVES AS A VALUABLE RESEARCH AND TEACHING HOSPITAL. THE SSSIHMS HAS TWO CAMPUSES, ONE IN WHITEFIELD AND THE OTHER IN PUTTAPARTHI.
- ***RADIOSAI GLOBAL HARMONY (RADIOSAI):*** BLESSED AND INAUGURATED BY BHAGAWAN IN 2011, RADIOSAI FIRST WENT ON THE AIR ON 23 NOV 2011, AND HAS OVER THE YEARS GROWN TO OFFER SIX DIFFERENT 24X7 STREAMING AUDIO AND VIDEO SERVICES ONLINE THAT CATER TO A WIDE INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE. IN ADDITION, THEY OFFER ORIGINAL WRITTEN, AUDIO, AND VIDEO CONTENT, ALONG WITH LIVESTREAMING SERVICES, THROUGH THEIR E-JOURNAL, AND WEBSITE ON RADIOSAI.ORG.

## *Touring Group Bios*

### **SRI RAVI KUMAR (GROUP LEAD)**

*Sai Institution Affiliations: SSSVV, Ooty: Grade 2-5; SSSHSS, Puttaparthi: Grade 6-12; SSSIHL, Puttaparthi: BCom, MBA; SSSIHMS, Puttaparthi Staff (Radiology and Urology)*



Hailing from Madikeri, Karnataka, Ravi joined the Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Ooty in 1978 at the age of 7. On his very first day of school, Bhagawan chose him to sing in His divine presence and he has continued to perform regularly ever since. Over the years, Ravi was personally trained by Bhagawan, and has been fortunate to have accompanied Bhagawan to Kodaikanal, Delhi, Shimla, Hadshi, and Mumbai. Ravi has a Bachelor in Commerce (BCom), and an MBA from SSSIHL. He was awarded the All-Rounder Gold Medal for his proficiency in an array of fields including academia, sports, cultural, and spiritual activities. Upon graduating with his MBA, Ravi was permitted by Bhagawan to train for and join the SSSIHMS in Puttaparthi, where he continues to work as a Senior

Manager for the Departments of Radiology and Urology.

## SRI AMEY DESHPANDE, PhD

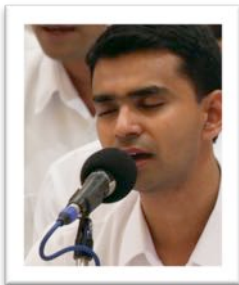
*Sai Institution Affiliations: SSSHSS (Grade 5-12); SSSIHL (MBA, MPhil, PhD)*



Originally from Maharashtra, Amey Deshpande joined the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School in Grade 5, where he excelled in academics, music and drama. After acquiring his BCom from Bangalore University in 2000, Amey trained to become a Chartered Accountant, while working with Hewlett Packard in their Financial Services Centre in Bangalore. Amey then enrolled in the MBA program at SSSIHL, followed by the MPhil program where he was awarded the Gold Medal, and finally, a PhD in the area of corporate strategy in 2016. Amey is a proficient vocalist, percussionist, playwright, actor, orator, and music/theater director having performed in all these capacities in the Divine presence since childhood. He has also been fortunate to travel with Swami to Kodaikanal.

## SRI ANAND PARASURAMAN

*Sai Institution Affiliations: SSMCM (Foundation, Dip, PDip); RadioSai (Staff)*



Originally from Nagpur, Maharashtra, Sri Anand comes from a family that has been active in the Sai Organization for many years. After spending his early years at home, he joined the SSMCM in 2005. Upon completion of his Foundation, Diploma and Post Diploma courses in 2010, he joined RadioSai as a Technical Assistant, and now manages all the audio-video related work in the mandir in Prasanthi Nilayam. He is also actively involved in the studio recordings that take place in RadioSai. Within the Prasanthi Bhajan Group (PBG), Sri Anand specializes in vocal performance, percussion and the sitar.

## SRI B. SIVA KUMAR, PhD

*Sai Institution Affiliations: SSSIHL: BSc, MSc, PhD (Chemistry) 2001; SSSIHL Faculty (Chemistry)*



Hailing from the picturesque town of Ooty, Tami Nadu, Siva Kumar joined SSSIHL in 1991 and obtained his BSc in Chemistry, following which he stayed on to pursue and receive his MSc and PhD in Chemistry. Siva Kumar then stayed on at SSSIHL as a researcher and finally joining the faculty, where he currently serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry. He has published articles in various national and international journals, and regularly presents his work at international conferences. Siva Kumar specialises in percussion instruments including the tabla, dholak, naal, drums and the octopad, and has accompanied several world-famous musicians who have visited Puttaparthi, including the Late Mandolin U. Sreenivas, Begum Parveen Sultana, and Grammy-Award-winner Dana Gillespie. During his graduate study, he was also a member of the SSSIHL Brass Band, where he played the clarinet. Siva Kumar has also traveled with Bhagawan to Kodaikanal, Mumbai, and Hadshi.

## SRI J. SAIDATH

*Sai Institution Affiliations: SSMCM: Foundation, Dip, PDip; SSMCM Faculty (Mridangam)*



Hailing from Kerala, Sri Saidath joined the inaugural batch at the SSMCM in 2001, staying on to complete his Foundation, Diploma and Post-Diploma courses in Music in 2007. Saidath then joined the SSMCM as a Mridangam teacher. The Mridangam is an ancient Indian percussion instrument used primarily in Carnatic ensembles. Shy by nature, Saidath transforms to electrify audiences once he begins performing. He has also had the privilege of travelling with Bhagawan to Hadshi, Mumbai, Delhi and Shimla.

## SRI SAI KRISHNA NARASIMHA RAO

*Sai Institution Affiliations: SSSHSS: Grade 11-12; SSSIHL: B.Com (Hons), MBA; Faculty (SSSHSS)*



Hailing from Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, Sri Sai Krishna joined the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School in 1996 in Grade 11. Upon graduation, he continued on to the SSSIHL, where he did his BCom (Honors), followed by his MBA. Sri Sai Krishna then left Puttaparthi to work in the financial services sector focusing on Banking and Investment Advisory Services before returning in 2012 to teach financial accounting to senior students in SSSHSS. He specializes in percussion instruments such as tabla, dholak and naal.

## SRI P. SREENIVASAN

*Sai Institution Affiliations: SSMCM: Foundation, Dip; SSMCM Faculty (Music)*



Hailing from Parur, Kerala, Sreenivasan joined the Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music in its inaugural year 2001, where he completed his Foundation and Diploma courses. Following this, Sreenivasan attended the University of Madras to complete his Bachelors and Masters degrees in Music. In 2007, he joined the Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music as a faculty member, specializing in Carnatic music. Sreenivasan has traveled with Bhagawan on several occasions as part of the music group, and continues to travel extensively for vocal performances.



## SRI S. SATHYA

*Sai Institution Affiliations: SSSHSS (Grade 1-12); SSSIHL (BSc, MSc); Faculty (SSSHSS)*



Hailing from Erode, Tamil Nadu, Sathya grew up in a family that was dedicated to following Bhagawan and His mission since the 1940s. Not surprisingly, Sathya joined the SSSHSS in Puttaparthi in 1988 in Grade 4 and never left. After high school, he got his Bachelors and Masters degrees in Science before joining SSSHSS as a teacher in 2004 where he teaches a number of subjects. Sathya is a gifted harmonium and keyboard player. He joined the Prasanthi Bhajan Group at the tender age of 13 and has been performing since, having accompanied reputed musicians like Dana Gillespie and Begum Parveen Sultana.

## SRI SIDDHARTHA RAJU

*Sai Institution Affiliations: SSSIHL: MBA, MA (English), PhD Candidate (English); Faculty (SSSHSS)*



Hailing from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Siddhartha is an excellent stage actor, playwright, vocal performer, and speaker. After being a part of the acclaimed Sundaram Bhajan group in Chennai for several years, he became a part of the PBG when he joined the SSSIHL, Prasanthi Nilayam to do his MBA. Following his graduation, he began pursuing his MA in English on Bhagawan's command who also asked him to start teaching at the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School (SSSHSS) upon his graduation. In 2016, he was conferred with the Sai Krishna Award for Best Teacher in the Prasanthi Nilayam campus. Currently, Siddhartha is pursuing his doctoral research in English. He has had the privilege of traveling with Bhagawan to Kodaikanal.



*Realize that there is nothing greater than devotional singing. The vibrations emanating from them make the heart vibrant. If you sing alone in your shrine, the vibrations return to you as a reaction. But in community singing, what you have is not a reaction but a wave of vibrations. They enter into the atmosphere and purify the polluted air. The atmosphere today is polluted by bad thoughts and feelings. When you sing the glory of god, the bad germs in the air are destroyed and the air gets purified by a treatment of antibiotics. Such is the power of devotional singing!*

*- Sathya Sai Baba*

(Delivered during a Divine Discourse on 26 Jan 1995)